Ill

Camden Mills. Rock Island Co
April 4th 1854

Dr Br.

I direct this note to the "Society of Inquiry" over wh I was once permitted to preside & in the deliberations & operations of wh I ever took a deep interest - But, in my capacity as Stated Clerk of Presby. (Rock River) you will allow me to address specially the members of the class almost ready to graduate. You Gentlemen & Brethren about to become coworkers - are doubtless, many of you at least casting about you & watching the shadow upon the dial of Providence, to learn When the Lord of the harvest would have you labour - Allow us then to remind you of the "Great West" & especially of our part of it - Rock River Presby embraces the North West corner of Ill. - a portion of the State wh perhaps embraces more natural advantages & consequently more evidences before hand that it will one day be a region filled with souls to be gathered for heaven or hell, than any other portion - Our territory embraces all the great water privileges of the two rivers Mississippi & Rock together the Coal & iron regions of Rock

River & the *lead* of Galena - Besides this we are now intersected by the first & only great western chain of rail roads wh has reached the Father of waters We are now in immediate contact with all the East by a Rail Road direct & continuous from N. Y. Boston & Philadelphia to the Mississipi wh is daily bringing in & scattering among us great numbers of eastern men who have both the will & means to work up our great natural resources. We see & feel the effects of this junction of the ocean of the east with the river of the west in the quickened pulse of business in all its departments. improvement. enterprise. speculation.— agriculture. the arts & trade. And shall the church manifest less enterprise than the world? Shall the church be less ready & active to occupy the field & supply the *wants* of the means of grace. & the sanctifying power of the word of G— than men of the world are to create that want? Shall agriculture trade & the arts outgrow Sabbath schools. churches & the outworks of the Redeemers Kingdom? Shall our *brothers & sisters & yours.* & their children come from homes of prayer. from sabbath & sanctuary privileges & perhaps. alas that it shd be so common. from the communion tables in the East to find & form prayerless homes in the West - & to lose the Sabbath, forget the sanctuary & to remember but as a dream of the past the sacramental season - in a word to become the Universalists, the Mormon; the "Spiritualist" or the Atheist of the West? These Br. are the questions that we are called upon to answer - to answer not perhaps as you have sometimes answered them when hearing of them in your quiet retreats at Princeton: or after the Reports of your Society, when you have felt your hearts warm & kindle in the ardent anticipation of an entire consecration to the effort. When you are now & when I was a few years ago; in viewing this work the pleasures of it & encouragements to it are real while the difficulties of it & the discouragements in it are pleasures! But Br when you come into it the whole diorama is changed. Then the pleasures of it & encouragements to it all apart from the simple difficult grasp of faith are found to have been much more imaginary than real - While the discouragements & difficulties are all real & more - O how much more the minister only knows when he feels them! As a reality in all its realness we are called upon to answer the questions above - And O how often, how often when we ask these questions does the answer return "echo"! The best we can do is to work behind this & wait beneath it The Lord loves train better than we do— Therefore we have tried to "pray the Lord of the harvest" & now we write to you Br. Will you come & help us? Come with burning zeal & bright weapons from the armory of P— & especially of your closets— We need such an itinerating Miss. & we would support one & supply him well— We have also several vacancies— Dixon the county seat of — county a new enterprise said by the Br. who know it to be a very interesting & encouraging point. "Lower Rock Island" a church among the farmers on a delightful prairie rapidly filling up. six miles from the Mississippi & as many from "Rock River"— Edwards or Camden one or the other— I labor in both but cannot do so longer— Camden is the Lowell of Rock River & the outlet of an extensive county— a church of 30 to 35 membership wh together with the missionating in regions adjacent will well pay & well supply a man— Edwards likewise— We have other points wh are only waiting for the men to cultivate to make them encouraging & productive— Lift up your eyes Br the harvest is large & white will you come & help us gather in bundles of immortal souls?

May the God of peace be with you furnishing you abundantly to the work opening before you

Yours in the Gospel

S. T. Wilson

Answered May 1st — '54
H. G. Hinsdale Cor. Sec.